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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 006072

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: NORTHERN IRAQ: TALABANI TRIES TO MEND FENCES WITH TURKEY

Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch. Reasons 1.5 b and d.

Summary

1. (C) Iraqi Governing Council member and leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Jalal Talabani, sent letters Sept. 23 to Turkish PM Erdogan and MFA Undersecretary Ziyal seeking improved relations between the PUK and Turkey. He also sent a verbal message noting that Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds are both allies of the US and that the PUK did not want to make any problems for Turkey. On the matter of Turkish troops deploying to Iraq, Talabani noted that the decision rested in the first instance with the US, and in the second with the Governing Council (GC), but it was important that Turkish troops not enter the PUK area. He planned to invite Turkish companies to do more business in the PUK area and would try to foster better relations between the Iraqi Kurds and Turkey. He returned the Turkish diplomatic passport that he has held for several years and thanked the Turks for making it available to him. According to the PUK rep in Ankara, Bahros Galali, Turkish MFA contacts recieved the letters warmly, agreed to forward them to Ziyal and PM Erdogan, and said that Talabani was welcome to visit Turkey. Galali told us that, if invited, Talabani might come to Turkey in November, while he is GC President. End Summary.

2. (C) On Sept. 25, PolMiloff met with Ankara PUK rep Galali, who said he had delivered letters from GC member and PUK leader Jalal Talabani to the MFA for U/S Ziyal and PM Erdogan. He provided us with his own translation from Arabic of the letter to Erdogan (see para 3) and read for us the letter to Ziyal. The highlights were as follows: Together we built the first step of the relationship between Iraqi Kurds and the GOT. We worked together against terror, fighting the PKK and securing the border. Along with the KDP we helped you achieve peace in Turkey. Now our relationship is not good. Together with you, I would like to take an initiative to improve relations between Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds, including the KDP and the PUK. Masoud Barzani and I went to Baghdad only days after Saddam fell to show that we consider ourselves Iraqi. We want a unified Iraq. We do not want an independent Kurdistan. This is our policy. We are ready to cooperate with you. Today I am returning my Turkish diplomatic passport. I am grateful for having had it. Now that Iraq is free, I have two Iraqi passports - one for GC members and one tourist passport. I am enclosing herewith a letter to Prime Minister Erdogan.

3. (C) Text of Talabani letter to PM Erdogan (unofficial translation):

Your Excellency The Prime Minister of Turkey and My Dear Brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan:
I would like to send greetings from my heart and explain some matters in this letter.
First, I would like to mention that I have been quite criticized by Kurdish nationalists when I started having good relations with Turkey. But I have never changed my ways and I continue on the same path. Moreover, I had the opportunity to establish very good relations with the deceased Mr. Turgut Ozal. I have worked for the KDP, the PUK and Turkey to bring our relations to this stage. We have worked against the PKK together. We have put control points on the Turkish border to prevent the entry of the PKK into Turkey. We have worked for Turkey so much. Secondly, I have wanted to establish good relations between the Iraqi family and Turkey and always worked for this aim. Thirdly, we have had very good relations with the Turkmen Front. We opened a Turkmen school and moreover we have requested from them to participate in our local parliament, but they did not. The Turkish military, the Turkmen Front and some diplomats are witnesses for this event and they have thanked us for that as well. We

have changed the regime of Saddam together with the Turkmen. But unfortunately, suddenly the Turkmen Front started propagandizing against us in the media. Fourthly, after the Saddam regime, we have always repeated that we do not want to establish an independent Kurdish government. We went to Baghdad and denied the propaganda and worked there. We have always said the following: we want territorial unity in Iraq and we want a democratic Iraq. We have never massacred the Turkmen. After the liberation of Kirkuk, I went there. I said: "since Turkmen are a minority, they need to have more rights than we do." Many people have heard my explanations. the head of the Turkmen Front's Kirkuk office, Mustafa Kemal Yaycili was there and thanked me as well. I would like to explain very clearly. Some people within the Turkmen Front made propaganda and stirred up trouble. Those people - Sanan Ahmet Aga and Mustafa Kemal Yaycili have worked with Saddam Hussein and (I have?) got some documents. Because the PUK was strongly against Saddam Hussein, those people who worked with Saddam propagandized against us. There were two reasons to do that for Saddam: first, to destroy relations between Turkey and the PUK and make us enemies; and second, Saddam wanted to cast me and the PUK in a very bad light to the Turkish public.

I cannot understand why our relations went bad. I have always wanted good relations with Turkey. We have always given preference to Turkish companies here and we have done lots of work with them. We have supported them. Our intelligence service worked with MIT (Turkish National Intelligence Organization). We never want to have bad relations with Turkey. We would like to live in a brotherly manner with Turkey.

When I was in Turkey previously, some people have protested me in front of the Ankara Palace. Despite this event, I did not leave Turkey and moreover wanted to come again. I have been to Moscow and I wanted to come to Turkey to refute the propaganda. Because of events in Sulaymaniyah, the Turkish media have pressed very hard explanations. As you know, there were Turkish officer in there and they have already confessed that they were trying to hit somebody. I was in Moscow with my son at the time and I could not come to Turkey because of the hard tone taken against us in the news.

My Dear Prime Minister, I would like to establish very good relations with Turkey and especially with your government. Our relations are very goof with the MFA, MIT and some people from the military. We would like to establish good relations in the political, economic, social and commercial fields and we never want to see bad dealings between Iraq and Turkey. We oppose the existence of any terrorist groups in northern Iraq and understand Turkey's sensitivity about this. We would like to have good dealings with Turkmen in Iraq and we will always continue providing support for that. I trust your humane, democratic, and Islamic personality and I believe that our relations will be very good. I believe you will prevent tyrannical propaganda. I would like to open a new page in our history to establish strong and good relations. Finally, I wish you health and success.

Your Brother,
Jalal Talabani
General Secretary of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
End text of letter.

14. (C) Galali said that when he presented these letters to MFA Deputy DG for the Middle East Safak Gokturk, they were warmly received. Gokturk said he would forward the letters and that Talabani was always welcome to visit Turkey. According to Galali, Gokturk also noted that if Turkish troops deployed to Iraq they would do so to help Iraq secure peace and freedom, and to shorten the occupation. Turkey, he said, would not come as occupiers.

15. (U) Baghdad Minimize Considered.
EDELMAN